EAA
SAFETY WIRE
FLIGHT ADVISOR AND TECHNICAL COUNSELOR NEWS

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Inside this issue:

Message From Headquarters

Joe Norris, EAA Staff

Here in Oshkosh we are just starting to emerge from a good, old-fashioned Wisconsin winter. We've been spoiled over the last few years with fairly mild winters, but this year we were reminded of what winter really is. But I think homebuilders in the upper Midwest were using their time wisely by spending the cold days and nights in the hangar or shop, as I've been getting quite a few calls for Tech Counselor visits and DAR inspections lately. Of course those in the southern climes don't have the same weather issues to deal with, but it seems that spring signals a new flying season no matter what latitude you live at. Let's all do our best to encourage our fellow EAA members to prepare themselves and their aircraft properly for the new flying season.

Those of you who are Flight Advisors have, as a part of your FA materials, a copy of the EAA/FAA video "First Flight in Your Homebuilt Aircraft". We have now posted this video to our website. You are welcome to offer the video to our fellow EAA members who might be preparing for the first flight of their new (or newly restored) aircraft. You may view the video at www.eaa.org. Click on multimedia, videos and it is located in the EAA video galleries.

One of the hot topics of discussion lately has been the FAA's report on the Amateur-built Aviation Rulemaking Committee (ARC). The final report can be found on the FAA web site at the following web address:

http://www.faa.gov/aircraft/gen_av/ultralights/amateur_built/media/ARC_FINAL_report.pdf

We are now awaiting the FAA's release of their proposed changes to amateur-built certification policy and procedures. These will be released for public comment in the near future. Keep an eye on the EAA web site for info on how to submit your comments. It's important that we all take the opportunity to let the FAA know how important this issue is to each and every one of us!

NOMINATIONS SOUGHT FOR 2008 SPIRIT OF FLIGHT AWARD

EAA is seeking nominations for the 2008 Spirit of Flight Award, which honors an EAA member who best exemplifies the spirit of research, development, or flight-testing in the flight-testing field. The award was first presented in 1997 by the Society of Experimental Test Pilots and Scaled Composites. Candidates for the Spirit of Flight Award should

have flight-test experience, and have shared their knowledge and experience with fellow EAA members through presentations, written articles, or as an EAA Flight Advisor. The award will be presented at EAA AirVenture Oshkosh 2008. To request a nomination form, contact the EAA Safety Programs Office at safetyprograms@EAA.org, or toll free, 888-322-4636 ext. 6864. The nomination deadline is June 1, 2008.

EAA Flight Advisor Program = Safety and Insurance!

Bob Mackey, Senior Vice President, Falcon Insurance Agency, Inc.

Several years ago I watched a video of an EAA Member working on the final details on his brand-new homebuilt. The weather was partly sunny and it was clearly a fairly windy day as you could see the clouds passing by at a good clip. A friend of the builder arrived and while the video camera kept recording the builder and his friend discussed plans for the 1st flight. During the conversation the builder explains that he's not sure he's ready to do the 1st flight and maybe series of runs up and down the runway would be a better plan. At this point you hear, on the video, the friend say, "hey you built it you can fly it". Well, as you can imagine, with the urging of the friend the builder decides to do a few passes up and down the runway and if everything feels good go ahead and do the 1st flight.

As the video continued to run you see the airplane head down the runway and as the tail comes up the airplane heads off the runway and ground loops to the right. The video stops and when the video starts again you watch the same results from several more attempts. Finally after watching 3 or 4 ground loops, I can't remember just how many there were because it was painful; the airplane makes it off the runway. As the airplane comes around to attempt a landing, you guessed it; the airplane touches down and promptly heads off the runway and ends up dragging a wing and collapsing the landing gear. The good news is the pilot/builder/owner didn't get hurt. The bad news the airplane was substantially damage…and uninsured! The sad news is this was all avoidable and insurance could have been in place.

Up until the beginning of the EAA Flight Advisor Program roughly half of all homebuilt 1st flights resulted in some type of accident or incident. I was lucky to be involved in the early meeting with EAA Staff, EAA Members, and others from the recreational community to develop the EAA Flight Advisor Program. Among the many things we discussed and items we identified was the availability of insurance for 1st flights. It was my responsibility to promote to the aviation insurance industry the details of the EAA Flight Advisor Program and to persuade aviation insurance companies to offer insurance coverage to EAA Members when they do their 1st flights provided they participated in the EAA Flight Advisor Program, which we were able to achieve.

Shortly after the advent of the EAA Flight Advisor Program I got a call one day from a representative from an aviation insurance company concerning a recent accident with a Pulsar during the 1st flight. My initial thought (worry) was that a 1st flight accident happened with a new homebuilt even though the EAA Member had participated in the EAA Flight Advisor Program and all the values of the Program I had promoted to the aviation insurance company were now going to be in doubt. I was shocked when the aviation insurance company representative said that EAA deserved a huge thank you for creating the EAA Flight Advisor Program. Further, because of the EAA Flight Advisor Program a builder/pilot was uninjured and the airplane was damaged but not a total loss…and fully insured. Wow!

As it turned out the Pulsar experienced an engine failure due to a fuel system problem and the builder/pilot, using what he had learned and planned as a result of the EAA Flight Advisor Program, picked the right day for weather, the right airport and runway with planned off-airport landing sights if needed, and when the engine quit followed a well-planned out emergency landing procedure. As I mentioned, no injuries, very little property damage to the airplane, and the airplane was fully insured.

There are a few exceptions for some aircraft, however in the majority of situations when EAA Members participate in the EAA Flight Advisor Program not only are they better prepared for the 1st flight of their homebuilt they will also find they can obtain insurance. This is a win-win! Fewer 1st flight accidents due to better preparations and insurance coverage in case something goes wrong all because of the EAA Flight Advisor Program.

If you would like obtain a free quote from the EAA Aircraft Insurance Plan you may call 866-647-4EAA (4322) or you may go to www.eaainsurance.org and complete the online quote request .

We are Volunteers!

Joe Norris, Senior Aviation Specialist

It is important to remember that all EAA Flight Advisors and Technical Counselors participate in these programs as volunteers. We're all EAA members helping other members! We recently had an issue where a Tech Counselor was asking whether he could charge a fee for his TC services. In a word, no. The Flight Advisor and Technical Counselor programs must remain totally volunteer in nature. We are not required to be Technical Counselors and/or Flight Advisors. We do so of our own free will, as a valued service to EAA members who can benefit from our knowledge and experience. To charge for these services would go against the EAA's "members helping members" culture! Remember too that charging for TC or FA services would remove you from coverage under EAA's insurance program. EAA members, and the FAA, recognize the value and importance of the Flight Advisor and Technical Counselor programs. Thank you for your *volunteer* service!

How to Get Hands-On Experience for Your Builders

Lisa Turner EAA TC #4541 & FA #1681

One of the questions that comes up frequently from builders when I make technical counselor visits is: "How can I get some hands-on experience in the building technologies to improve my proficiency level?". While each TC can spend time with their builders, and we usually do – giving instruction in the areas needed - we cannot always spend the time necessary to help the builder practice enough to become really proficient. While the EAA workshops do deliver hands-on practice, after the two days the builder is on his/her own and sometimes will hesitate to "practice" on their own project without more "dual".

Enter the "Apprentice Program". After several situations where homebuilders expressed misgivings to me about the next stage of their project – whether welding, fabric, woodworking, or painting – I suggested they go meet some of the folks out at their closest airport. We discover that not only are there people working on these same technologies nearby, but they are eager to share their experiences and lessons – and, yes, even allow the fledgling homebuilder to "help" with their current projects!

Our local airport, Lantana (LNA) in south Florida, is a perfect example. On this particular airport you will find a welding shop, a prop shop, a paint shop, a general aircraft repair shop, and a restoration shop – enough hands on experience potential to last a lifetime!

One of the builders I am working with decided to approach the restoration shop to see if he could devote time helping around the shop in the hopes of being able to perform some real work and gain experience. The answer was yes, and this builder is now spending two days a week working at this shop. He is gaining critical knowledge and getting tips and tricks from pros in woodworking, metal working, fabric covering, and painting. In return, the shop owner is getting real work output. Yes, the owner must supervise the work being done, but that is the trade-off – a careful, attentive learner produces more slowly but makes a contribution to the business, and obtains the experience he or she needs. From what I observed, the relationship appears to be a win-win.

So when your builder needs experience and has the courage and the time to offer to a small business owner, don't discount this terrific avenue for learning.

If there is an EAA chapter nearby, this can also be a big help, as the chapter knows what members are working on what projects, and can recommend someone to work with. However this is not always possible and not all builders are near active chapters, so the "Apprentice Program" seems to do well.

Hints for Homebuilders Is Back

Charlie Becker, Director of Member Programs

I'm thrilled to report that one of the long time staples of *Sport Aviation*, Hints for Homebuilders, is back. *Sport Aviation* will again have a monthly column which will feature hints, tips, and ideas from members about building aircraft. Now the really new twist on this is it won't just be in the magazine but we'll have videos as well. Thanks to the internet and high speed internet connections, we are now able to share building ideas in video, with minimal production cost, right on your home computer. The video Hints for Homebuilders are published each week in E-Hotline. If you are not receiving E-Hotline, just give us a call to sign up at 800-564-6322.

As Technical Counselors, you are in the field seeing and hearing about the good, the bad and the ugly of building aircraft. I'm asking that you share the innovative ideas you come across for print in the magazine. If you identify an area where builders are falling short and could use some educational support, let us know that as well. And finally, if you have some potential ideas for either print or video, please share them by emailing us at info@eaa.org with Hints in the subject line. If you are ever in the Oshkosh area and want to be on video, let us know. You can be the star of video Hints for Homebuilders.

Please check out the new videos at: www.eaa.org, click on Multimedia/Videos and the Hints are located in the Homebuilders video gallery.

TC Program Featured in EAA Video

Charlie Becker, Director of Member Programs

The latest (April 4) Spirit of EAA in Motion video focuses on the Technical Counselor program. Brady Lane, our staff videographer, tagged along on a Technical Counselor visit by Mel Asberry from Farmersville, TX. The video clip, which is about 3 minutes long, does an outstanding job of capturing the essence of the program. You really get an understanding of the value TCs provide; the volunteer spirit of members helping members achieve a goal.

Please take a few minutes to watch the video. From www.eaa.org, click on Multimedia/Videos it is located in the EAA video gallery.

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Amateur-Built Accident Statistics

Joe Norris, Senior Aviation Specialist

The FAA and EAA have recently been having some discussions regarding amateur-built aircraft safety issues. Of course, amateur-built safety is always an important issue for both EAA and FAA, and the FAA Office of Accident Investigation has been doing some digging to try to get a better handle on the overall accident picture. Some interesting statistics have emerged from these recent studies (FY 05-07).

The number that jumps out immediately is that **51% of all fatal accidents (91 accidents) were "loss of control" (LOC) accidents**. Of these accidents, 60 were attributed to some type of stall. Further "drilling down" into these stats reveals that of these stall accidents, almost 60% are stalls in the traffic pattern! Loss of control due to stalling is far and away the greatest cause of fatal accidents in amateur-built aircraft. These accidents accounted for 34% of the total fatal accidents in the study period. No other single cause reached double digit percentages. Even the catch-all "unknown" cause was only 9% of the total, with most other causes accounting for around 5% of the total.

This is good food for thought as we approach a Flight Advisor session with a prospective test pilot. There can be many reasons for a pilot to get into an inadvertent stall situation. Unfamiliarity with the aircraft, emotional stress of the initial flight-test period, and lack of a good solid test plan all can put a pilot "behind the aircraft" and in greater danger of getting in trouble. All of these issues can be addressed by the Flight Advisor program. Flight Advisors can have a positive effect on these accident statistics, which will help to protect our freedom to build, test and fly our homebuilts!

Forced Landing	LOC (stall)	LOC (aero-batics)	LOC (power loss)	LOC (LALT)	LALT (aero-batics)	LALT	Midair	CFIT	Struc-tural Failure	Suicide	Un-known	Other
17	60	6	17	8	13	4	6	13	13	1	16	2
9.7%	34.1%	3.4%	9.7%	4.5%	7.4%	2.3%	3.4%	7.4%	7.4%	.6%	9.1%	1.1%

51.7%